

K-12 Public School Buildings

Report highlights

January 2022

A statewide facility condition assessment of K-12 public school buildings is needed. The last assessment was done in 1993.

School districts are required to submit 10-year building maintenance plans to the Division of Building Safety. Few districts do, and nothing is done with the submitted plans.

School districts are required to allocate 2% of building replacement value on building maintenance annually. The formula used to calculate replacement value is outdated and has not been changed since 2008. Additionally, 2% may not be a sufficient requirement to meet maintenance needs.

It is inconclusive whether the increased use of special property tax levies negatively impacts the passage of school bonds; however, the current two-thirds vote threshold poses a significant barrier to bond approval.

Idaho spends the least on school buildings annually compared to neighboring states. Additionally, Idaho lacks the state-level programs and agencies of neighboring states that assist districts with capital funding and planning of their buildings.

Of the 77 school district administrators that responded to our survey, nearly 60% rated their school buildings in “fair” or “poor” condition across all school types. Responses from charter schools were more positive.

Schools rated “fair” or “poor” have deferred maintenance needs that must be addressed and buildings that may need to be replaced entirely. Schools with “excellent” and “good” assessments have little to no deferred maintenance or needed upgrades.



The gray area represents district administrators that responded with either “not applicable” or “don’t know.”



Policy Considerations

The Legislature should consider commissioning a statewide facility condition assessment of school buildings. The assessment would give the Legislature an accurate and complete picture of building conditions and identify schools with the most pressing needs. The Legislature and school districts can use this information to prioritize deferred maintenance, replacement, and construction of additional schools.

View the report:
www.legislature.idaho.gov/ope/

